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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 000984

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SUBJECT: PM ABDULLAH URGES NEW APPROACH TO DARFUR, SEEKS
OIC FUNDING

Classified By: CDA David B. Shear, reasons 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, in a June 4 meeting with visiting General Peter Pace, described his "new approach" to Darfur focused on returning IDPs to their homes with security guarantees from Khartoum. Abdullah has asked wealthy OIC countries to contribute to a new humanitarian fund. The Prime Minister may write to President Bush regarding Darfur. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi outlined the need for a "new approach" to ending the Darfur humanitarian crisis, in his June 4 discussion with visiting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Peter Pace and the Ambassador (septel). Based on his one-day visit to Darfur in April, PM Abdullah said the international community and Sudan should pursue a strategy of returning IDPs to their home villages and providing aid in these villages. The current centralization of humanitarian aid served as a magnet for villagers and a disincentive for them to return home. The current situation in the IDP camps "is a mess," while the "real towns of Darfur are doing well" with food and other supplies in their shops. For its part, the Sudan government should provide security guarantees for the villages, and Abdullah said he had encouraged President Bashir to take this action.

¶3. (C) PM Abdullah said that as OIC chairman he had written to select OIC countries to seek urgent funding for humanitarian projects in Darfur, including for provision of food and medicines, as well as education. Malaysia also would assist, possibly through Petronas, Malaysia's state-owned oil and gas company that has major investments in Sudan. PM Abdullah indicated he may write to President Bush regarding Darfur. "We cannot abandon Sudan," the Prime Minister concluded.

¶4. (C) Following the meeting, the Ambassador sought clarification on the Darfur comments from the Prime Minister's Foreign Policy Advisor Abdul Kadir Mohamad. Abdul Kadir confirmed that PM Abdullah had written to heads of state in UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Brunei, among others, seeking contributions that would be deposited with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for use in aiding IDPs in Darfur. The IDB would identify the projects for funding. PM Abdullah had been motivated by the "terrible conditions" he witnessed in the IDP camps and his belief that aid efforts should encourage the displaced to return home. Abdul Kadir noted that the Prime Minister raised the issue in the meeting

with General Pace because PM Abdullah wanted President Bush to be aware of his (Abdullah's) activities related to Darfur.

15. (C) Comments by Malaysian Foreign Ministry Under Secretary for the OIC, Ibrahim Abdullah, tracked closely with

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Abdul Kadir's. Ibrahim added that Malaysia's semi-official aid organization, Mercy, is working in Darfur. When we checked with Mercy, however, they informed us that had closed their Darfur operations after handing over a clinic to Sudanese authorities.

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